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Public Character Perceptions of Sexually Deviant Groups

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Introduction

- Attitudes towards Sex Offenders
- Sexual Crime and the Media
- Labelling and Stigma
- Psychopathy

Attitudes Towards Sexual Offenders

- Attitudes towards sex offenders more negative than non-sex offenders (Craig, 2005; Hogue, 1993).
- Differences between groups: Public samples are more negative than professional samples (Gakhal & Brown, 2011; Johnson, Hughes & Ireland, 2007; Kjelsberg & Loos, 2008)
- Attitudes predict stereotype endorsement (Sanghara & Wilson, 2006) and punitive judgements (Hogue & Peebles, 1997; Kjelsberg & Loos, 2008).

Sexual Crime & The Media

- The media is the main source of information for public perceptions and attitudes towards sex offenders (Thakker, 2012)
- The media also influences sex offender legislation and notification policies (Critcher, 2002; Sample & Kadleck, 2008).
- The media reports on extreme, unrepresentative cases of child sexual abuse involving abduction and murder (Ducat, Thomas & Blood, 2009; Thakker & Durrant, 2006)

Labelling Theory & Stigma

- When individuals are labelled as deviants within society they begin to subscribe to the associated stereotypes (Link, 1982)
- Mandatory sex offender registration and community notification is the most apparent example of labelling and reproduces the deviant label leading to stereotyping and stigmatisation (Schultz, 2014).
- Sex offender is an inclusive label that disregards the heterogeneity of sex offenders (Quinn, Forsyth & Mullen-Quinn, 2004)
- The sex offender label has detrimental effects including isolation, job loss and harassment (Burchfield & Mingus, 2008; Robbers, 2009)

Psychopathy

- Psychopathy has been associated with sexual and non-sexual violence (Walsh, Swogger & Kosson, 2009).
- Individuals high in both psychopathy and sexual deviance represent a high-risk group of individuals (Harris et al., 2003).
- Sex offenders are heterogeneous in terms of psychopathy, where rapists are more psychopathic than child molesters (Porter et al, 2000; Stinson, Becker & Tromp, 2005; Woodworth et al., 2013).

Hypotheses

- Attitudes towards sex offenders will impact on the public's psychopathic character perceptions of the sexual offending/deviant label
 - ATS and CAPP ratings correlated
 - Hi ATS scorers different than Low ATS scorers
- Character perceptions, as measured by the CAPP will differ depending on the offending/deviant label

Method

- All data was collected through an online survey
- Informed consent & debrief
- Withdrawal at anytime

- Sample: 177 community members
- 81% (143) females & 19% (33) males
- Ave age 24.5 years
- 65% students, 31% working, 3% not working

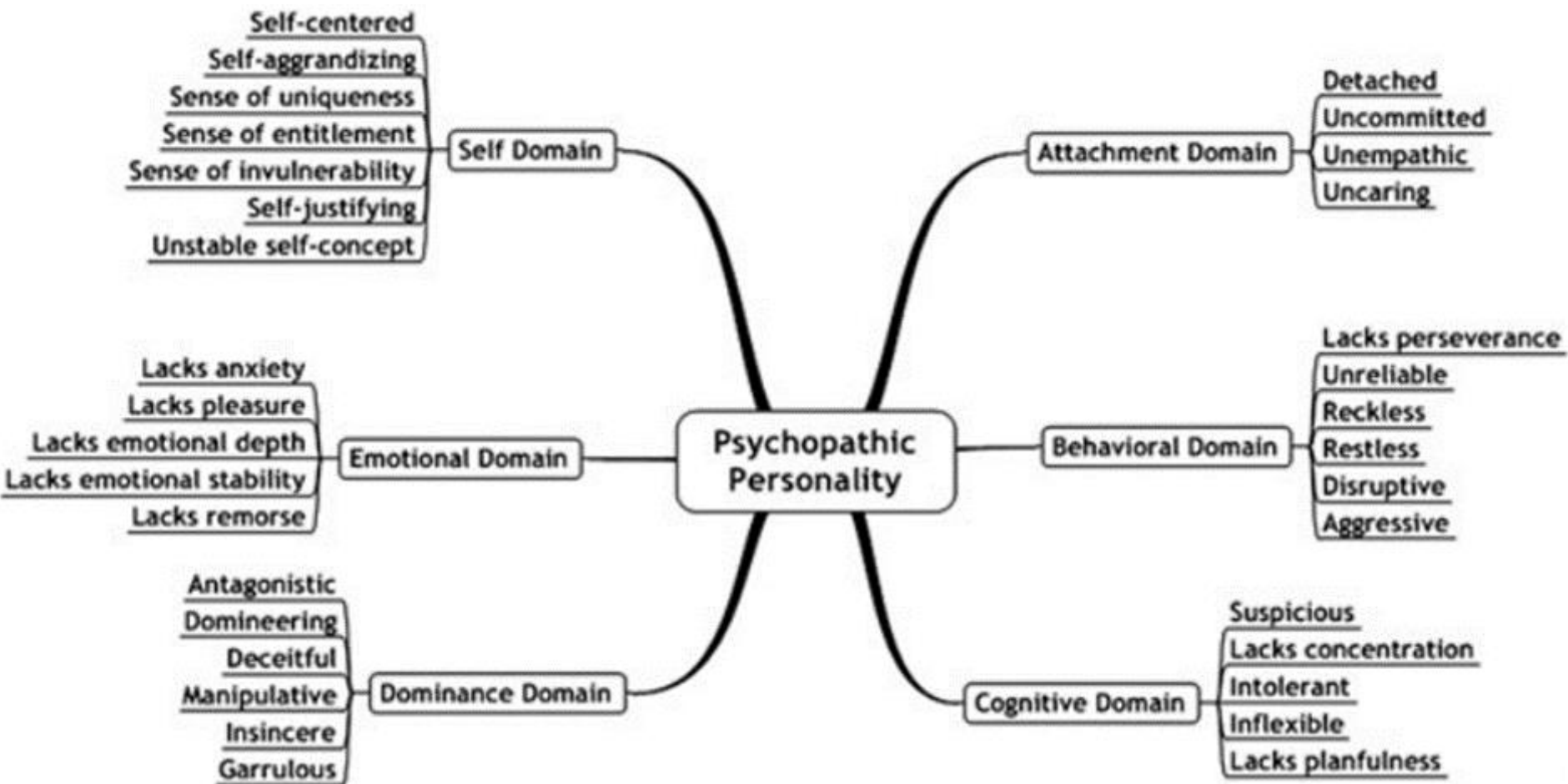
Measures

- **ATS–21 (Hogue, 2013)**
 - Measures pre-existing attitudes towards sex offenders
 - 5-point Likert-type scale; 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.
E.g. Trying to rehabilitate sex offenders is a waste of time and money
- **Perceptions of Sex Offenders Scale PSO (Harper & Hogue, 2015)**
 - Measures stereotypes of sex offenders, tapping into affective judgement based responses
 - 6-point Likert-type scale; 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree.
E.g. Most sex offenders are unmarried men
- **Punitive Attitudes Questionnaire PAQ (Imhoff, 2015)**
 - Taps into attitudes regarding punishment
 - 6-point Likert-type scale; 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree.
E.g. Paedophiles should be chemically castrated.

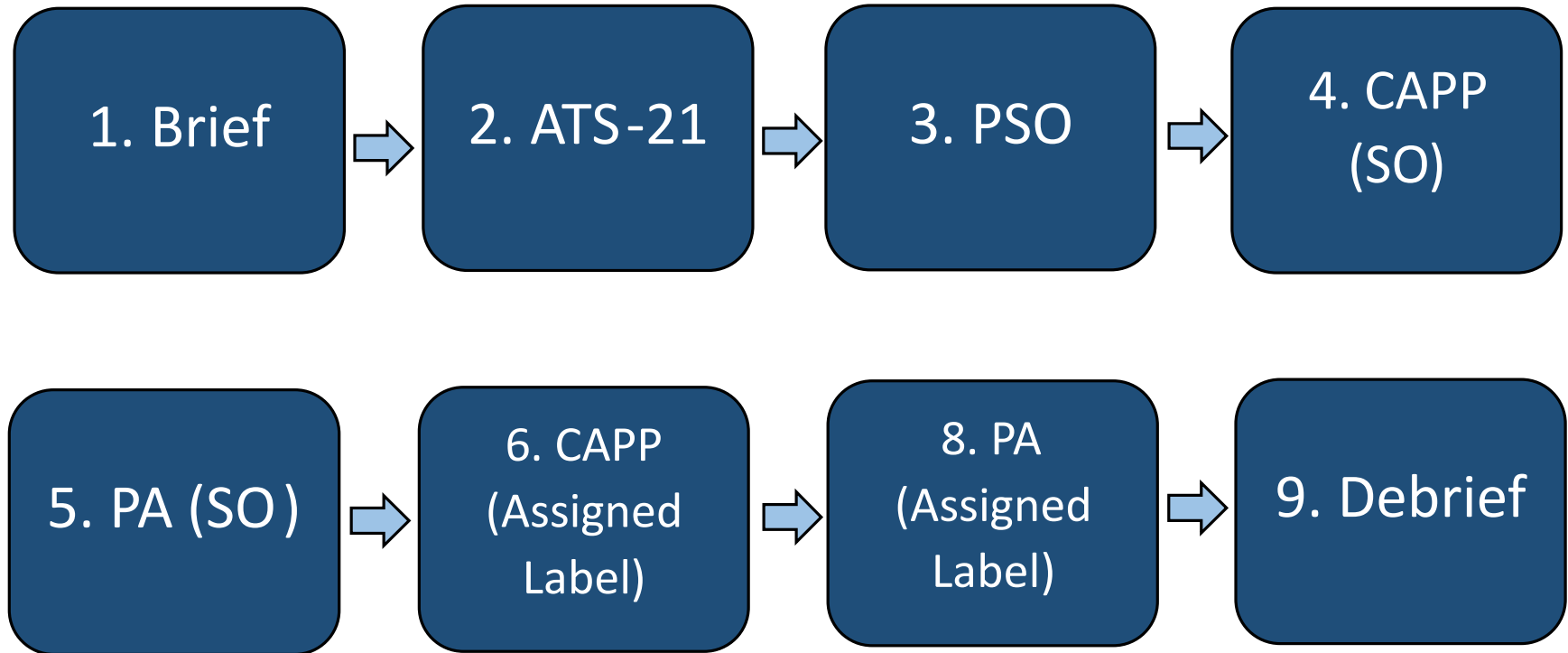
The Comprehensive Assessment of Psychopathic Personality (CAPP) (Cooke, Hart, Logan & Michie, 2012)

- A measure which represents a concept map of psychopathic personality disorder
- Used in the current study as a personality measure.
- 42 items
 - 33 CAPP items
 - 6 domains of personality functioning
 - 9 foil items considered inconsequential to psychopathy
- Each item defined by 3 synonymous adjectival descriptors
- 7-point Likert-type scale
 - 1=not like that at all to 7=definitely like that

*E.g. **AGGRESSIVE (threatening, violent, bullying).** How well does this personality characteristic define the person you rate?*



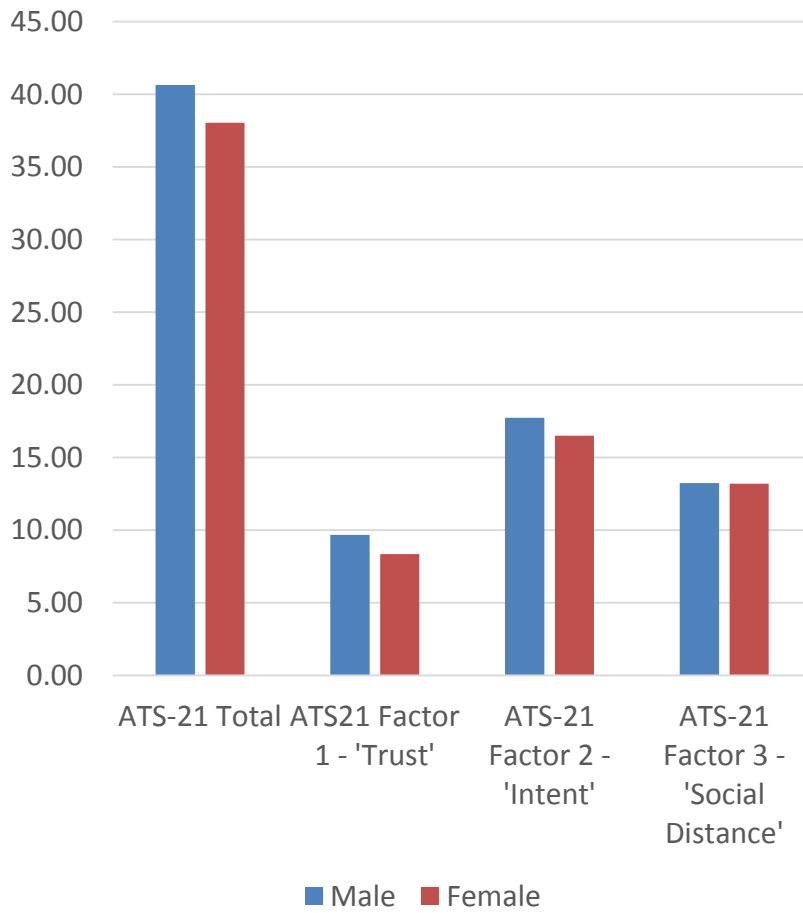
Procedure



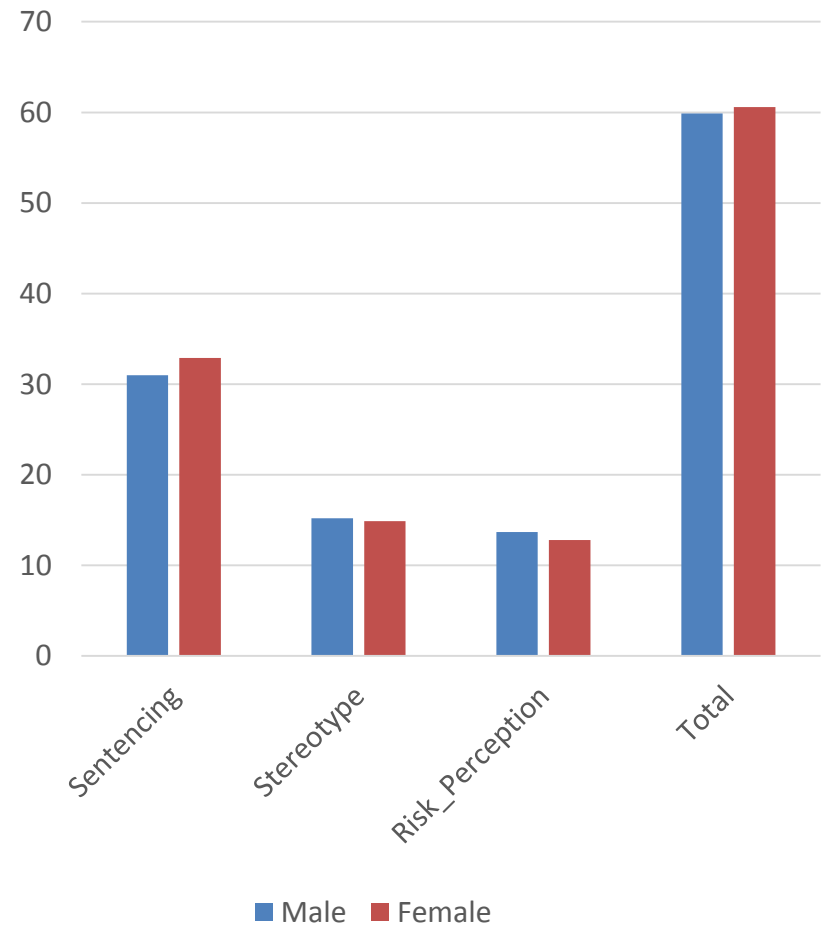
Labels: Sex Offender (SO), Psychopath, Paedophile, Sexually interested in Pre-pubescent Children, Rapist, Violent Offender

ATS-21 and PSO Scores

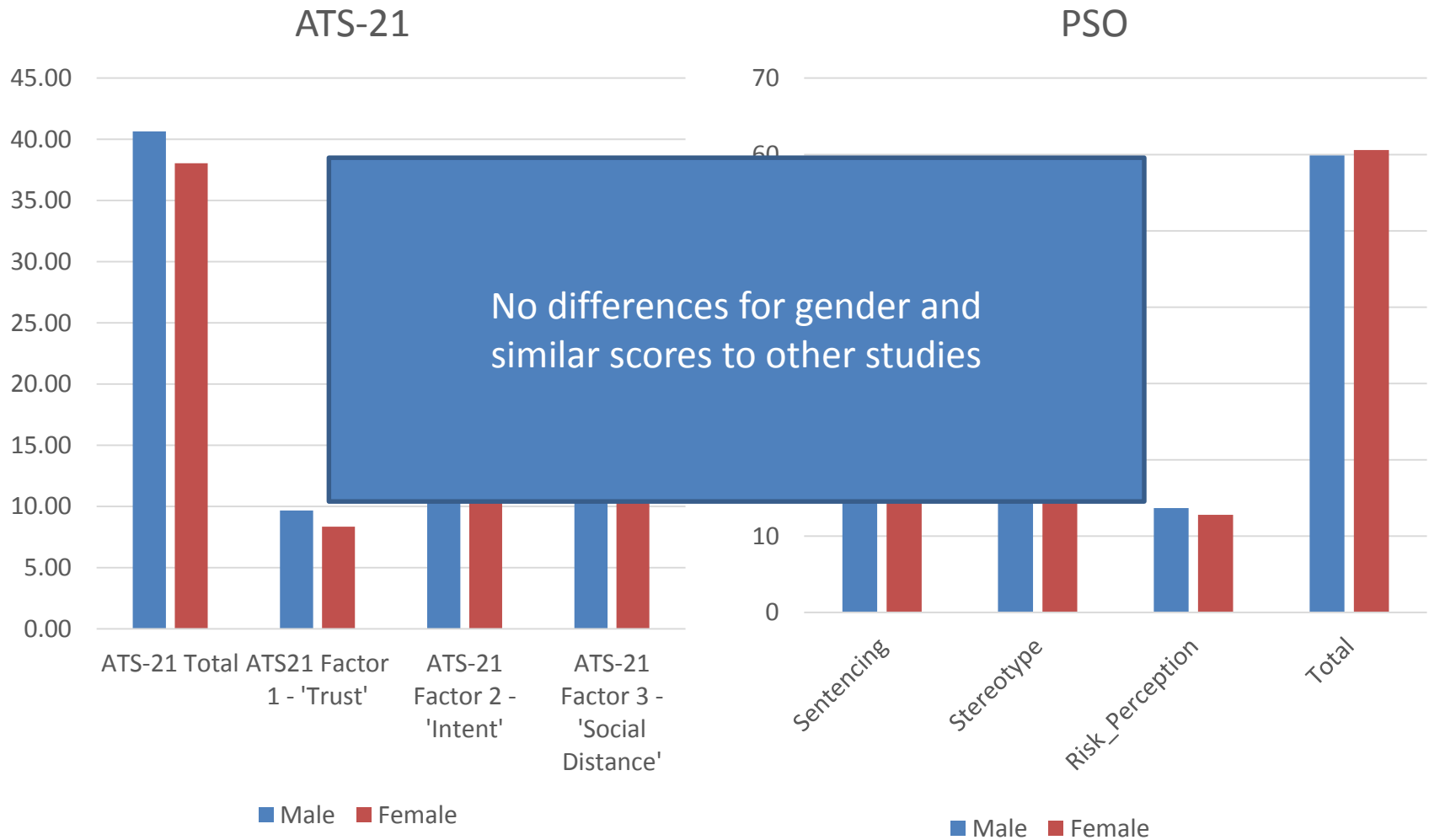
ATS-21



PSO



ATS-21 and PSO Scores



Sex Offender CAPP items related to ATS-21

DOMINEERING	-.265**
ANTAGONISTIC	-.209**
LACKS EMOTIONAL DEPTH	-.259**
INFLEXIBLE	-.201**
DISRUPTIVE	-.276**
SELF-JUSTIFYING	-.199**
DETACHED	-.304**
SUSPICIOUS	-.249**
INSINCERE	-.247**
LACKS EMOTIONAL STABILITY	-.174*
UNRELIABLE	-.351**
CONSIDERATE	.251**
STRANGE	-.284**

SELF-AGGRANDIZING	-.236**
INTOLERANT	-.245**
UNEMPATHIC LACKS PERSEVERANCE	-.353**
PERSEVERANCE	-.251**
LACKS ANXIETY	-.325**
LACKS REMORSE	-.337**
MANIPULATIVE	-.206**
UNCOMMITTED	-.365**
UNCARING	-.321**
DECEITFUL	-.297**
AGGRESSIVE	-.286**
SELF-CENTRED	-.295**

Sex Offender CAPP items related to ATS-21

DOMINEERING	-.265**
ANTAGONISTIC	-.209**
LACKS EMOTIONAL DEPTH	-.259**
INFLEXIBLE	.201**
DISRESPECTFUL	.176**
SELF-DESTRUCTIVE	.151**
DETACHED	.141**
SUSPICIOUS	.131**
INSINUATING	.121**
LACKS EMOTIONAL STABILITY	-.174*
UNRELIABLE	-.351**
CONSIDERATE	.251**
STRANGE	-.284**

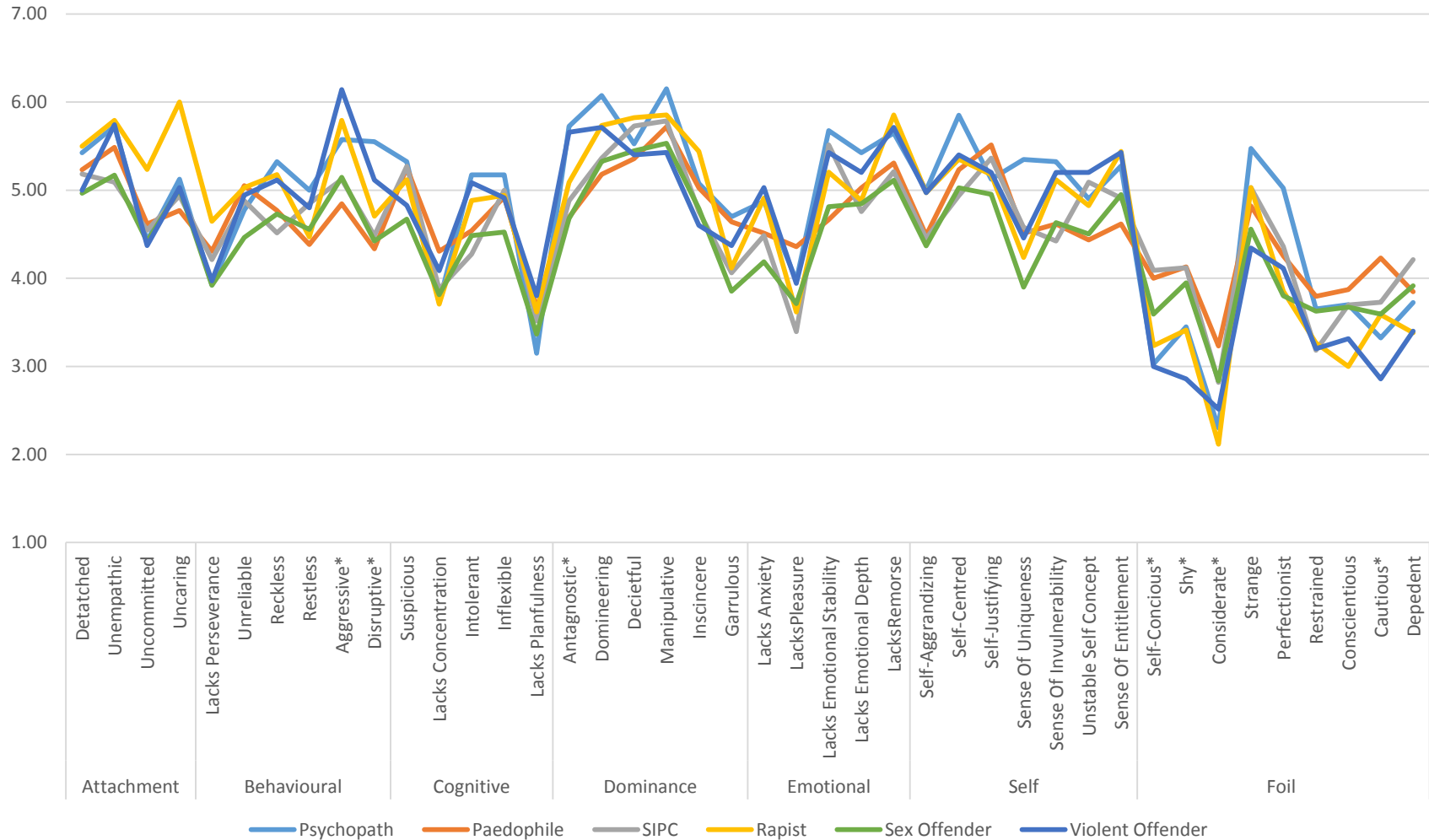
More Negative Attitudes
to Sexual Offenders
(lower ATS-21 scores)

SELF-AGGRANDIZING	-.236**
INTOLERANT	-.245**
UNEMPATHIC	-.353**

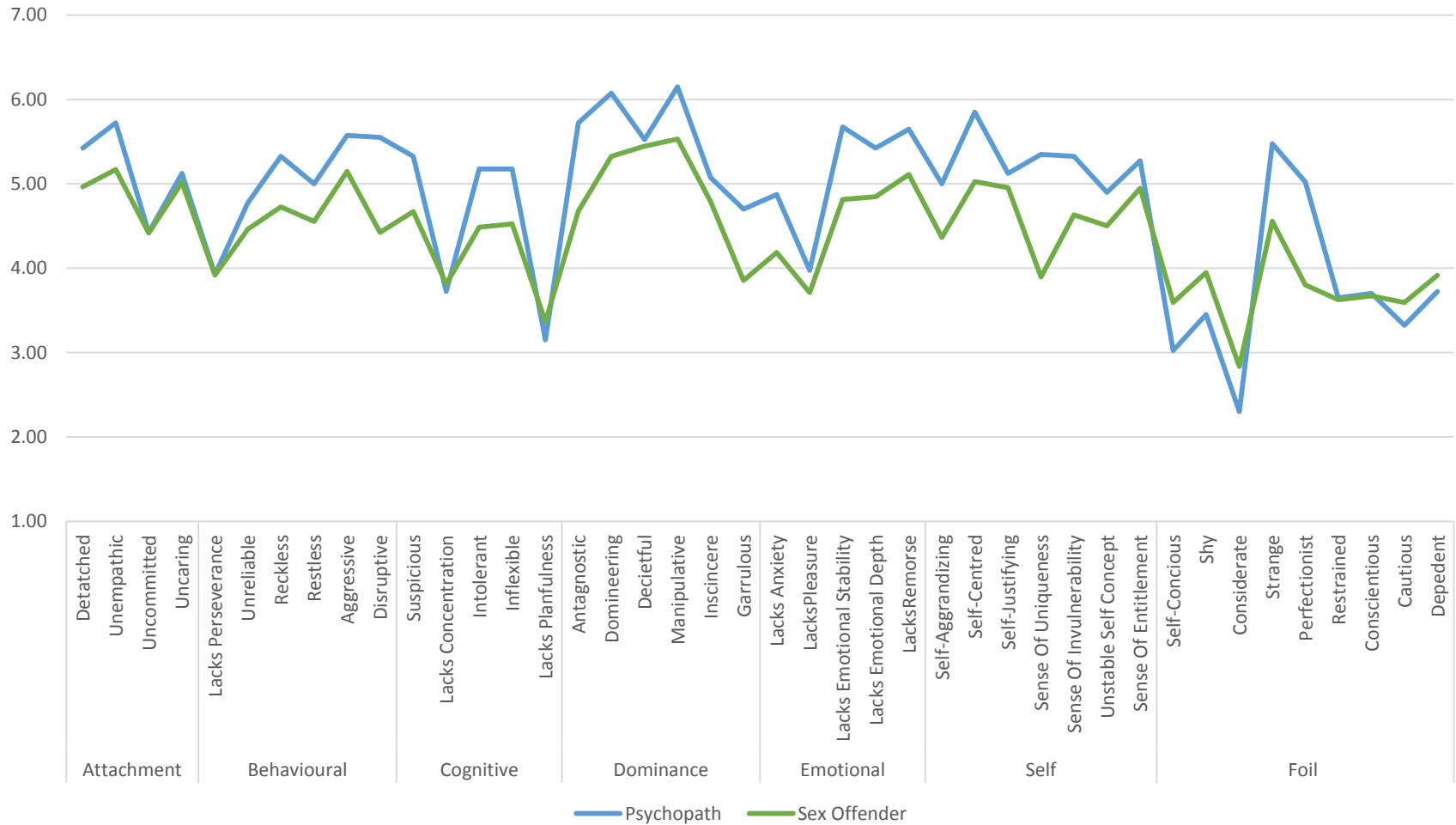
Rated as sexual offenders having more
psychopathy personality characteristics
(greater endorsement of CAPP Traits)

SELF-CENTRED	-.295**
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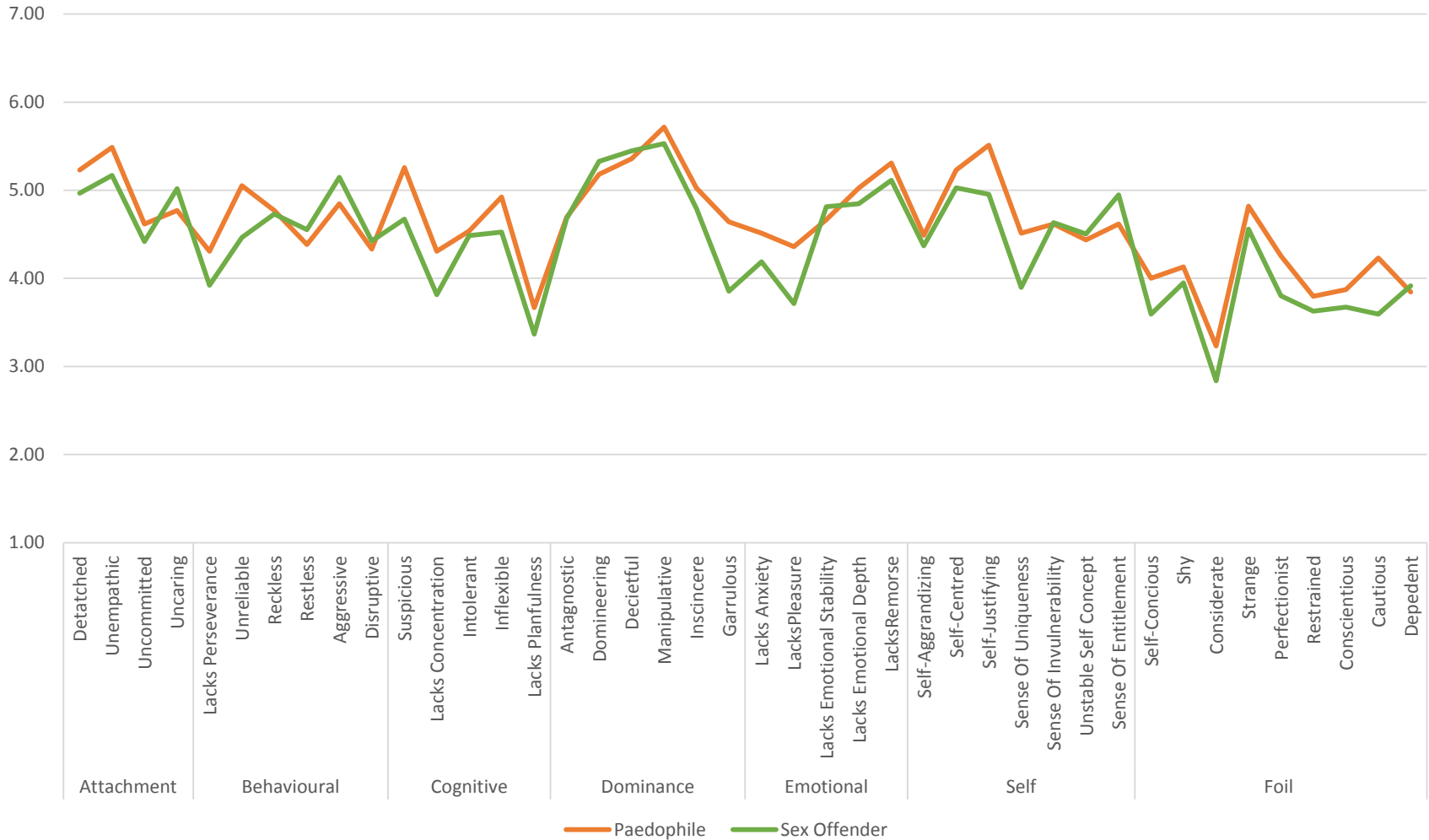
CAPP Ratings across labelled groups



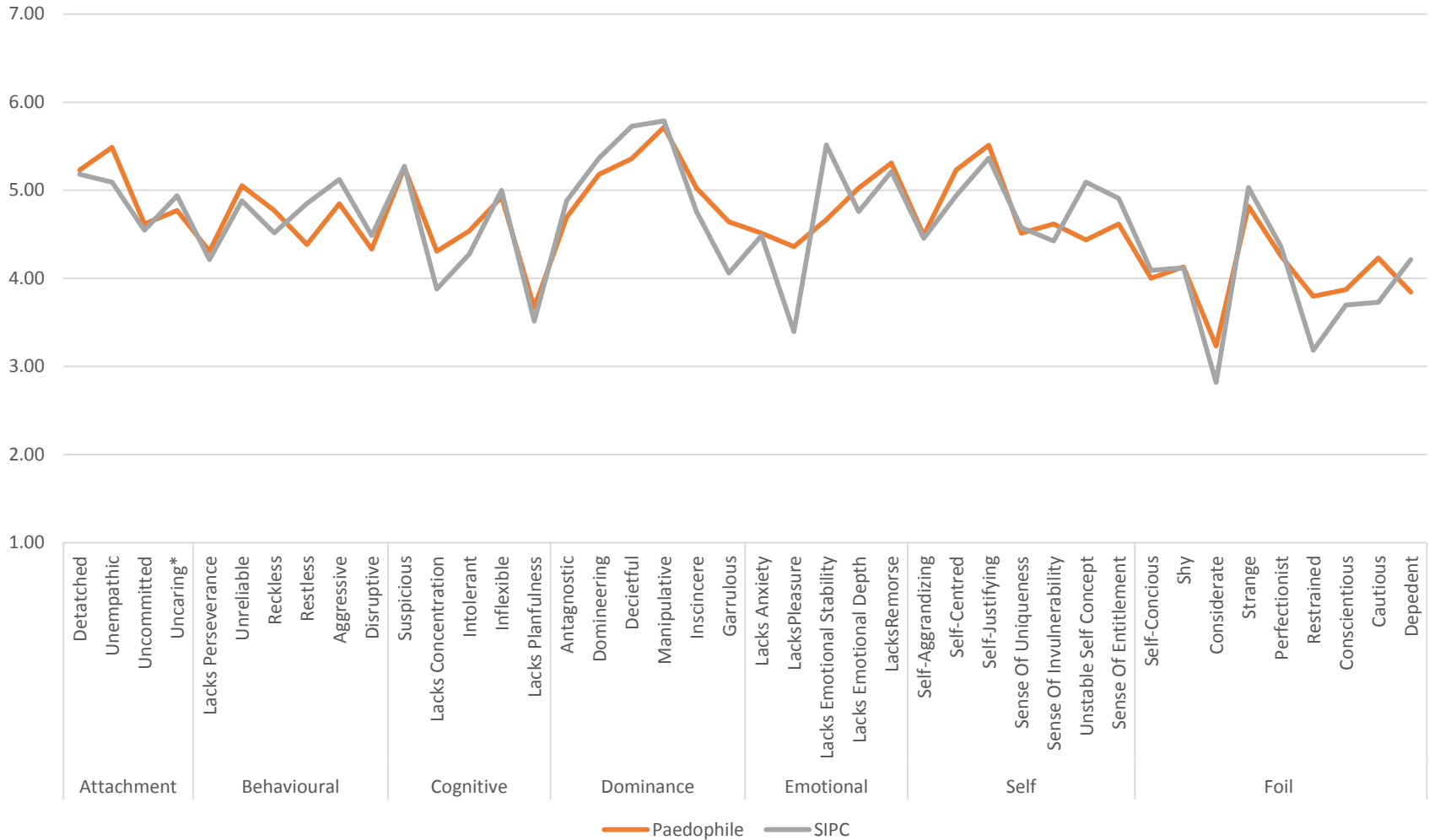
CAPP: Psychopath vs Sex Offender



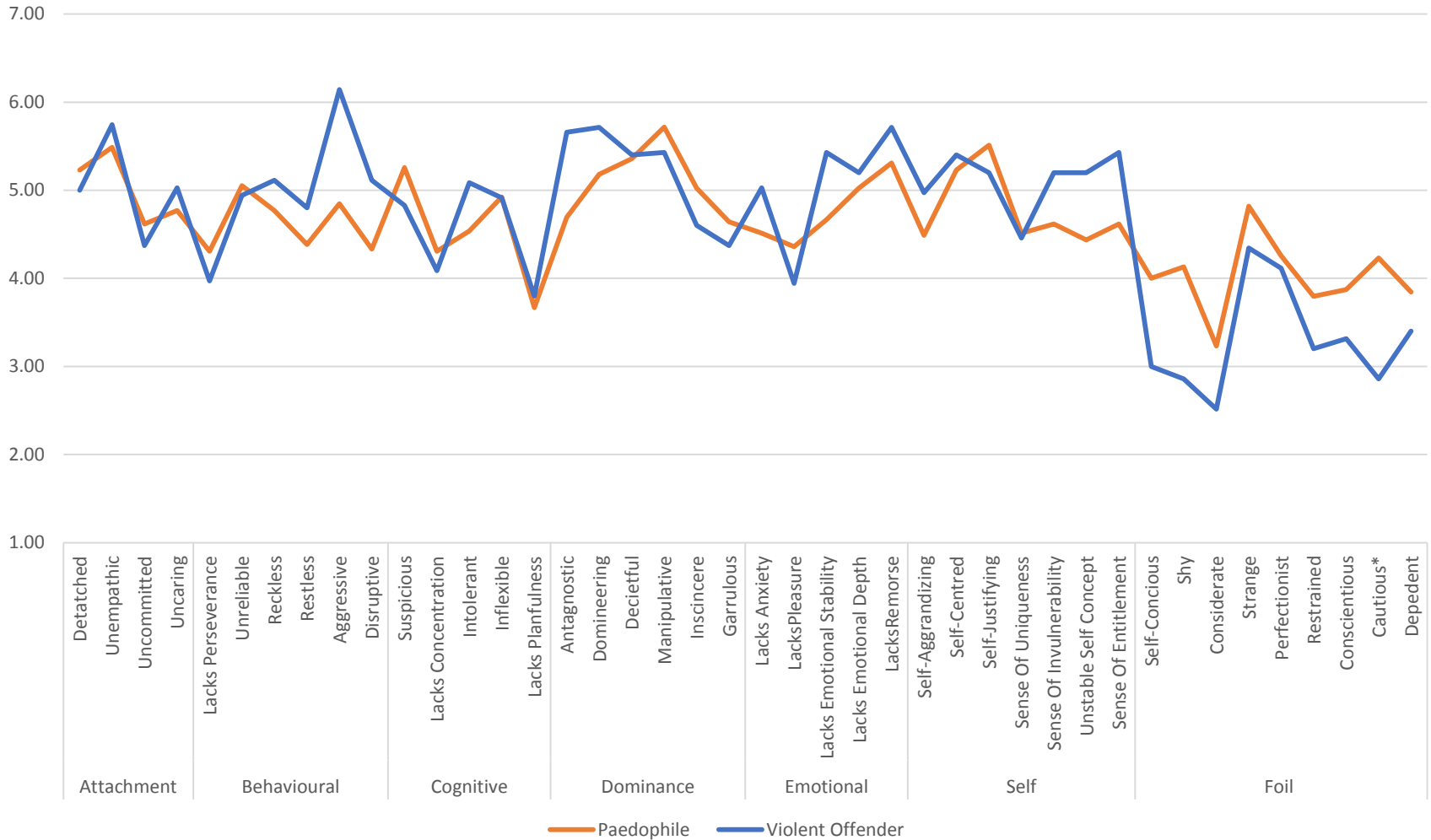
CAPP Paedophile vs Sex Offender



CAPP: Paedophile vs SIPC

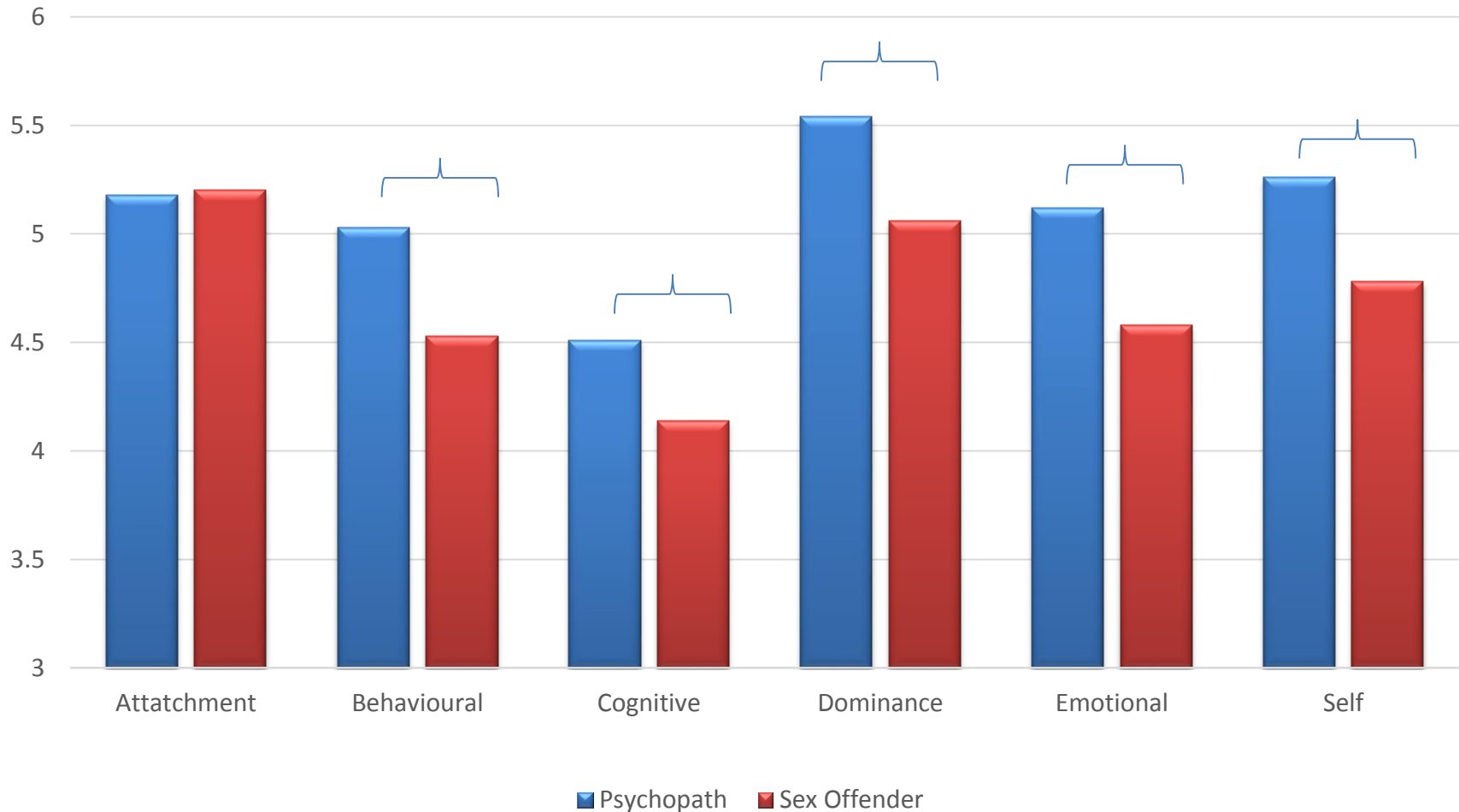


CAPP: Paedophile vs Violent Offender

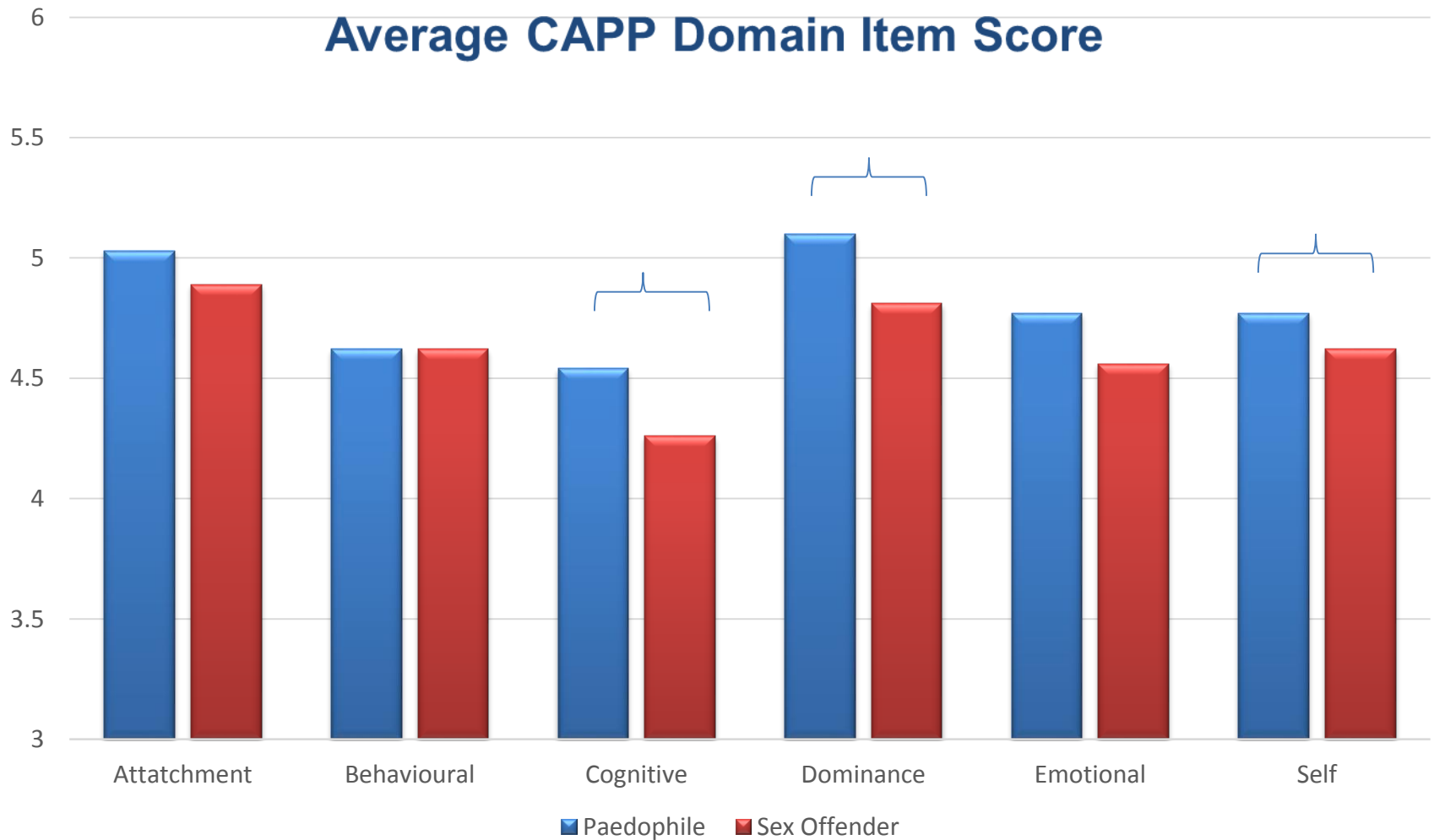


CAPP: Psychopath vs Sex Offender

Average CAPP Domain Item Score

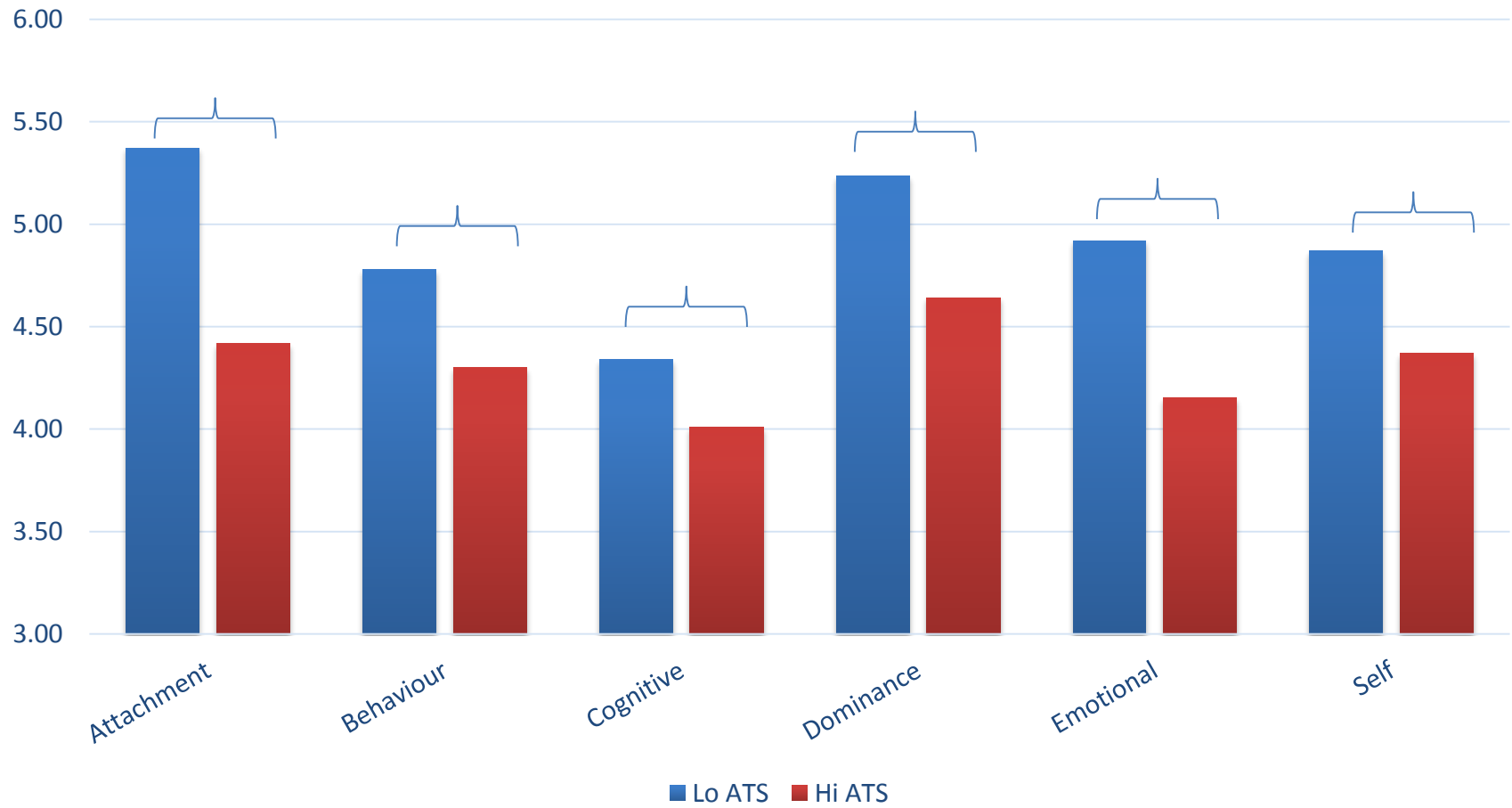


CAPP: Paedophile vs Sex Offender



CAPP Domain Scores depending on Lo vs Hi ATS

Average CAPP Domain Item Score



Summary

- Profile analysis provides a way of understanding in more depth perceptions and stigma
- Attitudes and Labels both impact on character perceptions
- For sexual offenders, more negative attitudes (ATS-21) the greater the perceived CAPP characteristics
- Paedophiles and those Sexually Interested in Prepubescent Children (SIPC) seen the same way
- Prototypicality analysis for use to better understand stereotypes and judgements

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